

## Immune Globulin & Hepatitis A Vaccine: What *You* Need to Know

Hepatitis A, also called infectious hepatitis, is a contagious viral disease that damages the liver. Depending on your circumstances, it may be recommended that you get either the hepatitis A **vaccine** or **immune globulin** (IG). Both are administered directly into a muscle.

The information below explains the difference between the two.

Immune Globulin (IG)	Vaccine
1. <b>Immune globulin</b> is a treatment given <b><i>after an exposure</i></b> to the hepatitis A virus but before symptoms occur. It contains antibodies, which may prevent hepatitis A, or make the symptoms less severe. It must be given within 14 days of exposure to the hepatitis A virus.	1. <b>Hepatitis A vaccine</b> is given <b><i>before an exposure</i></b> to the hepatitis A virus. It helps your body develop protection (immunity, your own antibodies) against the hepatitis A virus.
2. IG starts to work right away.	2. Hepatitis A vaccine takes 2-4 weeks to become effective.
3. IG requires a <b><i>single</i></b> injection.	3. Hepatitis A vaccine requires <b><i>two</i></b> injections, given at least 6 months apart, for long lasting and complete protection. (However, one dose will provide a lot of protection.)
4. IG protects against hepatitis A for only about 3 months.	4. Hepatitis A vaccine gives much longer and better protection than IG.

### Travel Out of Country

**Please note:** Immune globulin also is recommended for ***pre-exposure*** protection for travelers to areas with high rates of hepatitis A who are:

- Younger than 2 years of age;
- Traveling less than 4 weeks after receiving the first dose of hepatitis A vaccine; or
- Allergic to a component of the hepatitis A vaccine.

Otherwise, vaccination with hepatitis A vaccine is recommended prior to travel.